

Golf by the Doctors' Orders Leads to Some Interesting Developments in Business

MR. HARMON looked as much out of place in the big New York sporting goods store as a longshoreman in overalls in a Ritz dining room.

He was a fat, short, broad-faced, bald little man with a chunky, stolid face and a walk that reminded one of an afflicted alligator.

"I want to buy some things to play golf with," he confessed to the bustling floorwalker, in a high, worried voice.

"Second aisle to your left," the floorwalker directed him.

"It's doctor's orders," Mr. Harmon said defensively. "It isn't as if I wanted to play. I'm not that sort of a fellow."

"Ah, yes," the floorwalker said disinterestedly. "Second aisle to your left."

Mr. Harmon stumped away to the department where golf clubs were sold. He wanted to get some things to play golf with. He wanted to get some things to play golf with. He wanted to get some things to play golf with.

"Do you want a complete outfit?" "I want something just as cheap as I can get it to play golf with. I don't know anything about what you use, but whatever it is I got to have it."

"You're just beginning," the clerk quipped.

"I talk like a man that had been wasting his time playing the fool game all his life," Mr. Harmon countered. "I don't know anything about it, and if I could find a doctor in this town that had any sense I'd never learn anything about it either. I've spent my life in the bakery business and always when I got sick some doctor gave me some medicine and I got well again. This year I didn't feel so good and all the doctors I go to tell me I got to play golf. So, Mr. Harmon concluded, 'I'm going to get it.'"

A TALL, bony, gray-faced man with a straggly beard, who had wandered aimlessly near during the conversation, spoke abruptly to Mr. Harmon. "I beg your pardon," he said in gloomy, deep tones. "I couldn't help overhearing what you said. I'm not only in the same predicament, but in the same business as yourself. You said you were a baker?"

"Yes, sir," Mr. Harmon piped, immediately pleased. "A. K. Harmon & Son, wholesale bakers—that's me, sir."

"I've heard of you in the trade," the tall man said solemnly. "My name is Bassett—George D. Bassett & Sons, wholesale bakers."

"Well, well, well," said Mr. Harmon, ignoring the clerk. "I've heard of you people. Yes, indeed. Well, I'm glad to see you. How's business this year?"

"Trotter!" said Mr. Bassett gloomily. Mr. Harmon nodded enthusiastically. "Ain't it the truth! Everything you buy goes up and everything you sell comes down. Have trouble with your help?"

"All the time," Mr. Bassett declared in sepulchral tones. "Nothing but trouble."

"Same way with me," Mr. Harmon declared enthusiastically. "And the wages we got to pay them days."

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Harmon. "Ain't that funny? So'm I. We got a lot of things alike, aureh. Of I on got one son. Of course he's a hard-working boy and he means all right, but—"

"I know exactly how you feel," Mr. Bassett said sadly. "Always wanting to jump ahead. I don't know what boys are coming to these days. Once a week is all I can spare, Mr. Harmon. I even so much as turn my head a—"

"You want a driver and a brassy," the clerk interrupted decisively. "And a masher and a putter and a mid-iron men and in the same fix."

Mr. Harmon flapped his hands in protest. "I told you before I don't know what I want," he said irritably. "Just give me the cheapest you got and whatever I have to have to play golf with."

"Give me the same," Mr. Bassett said sorrowfully.

The clerk bowed again and withdrew. He returned presently with two cylindrical bags from which protruded the shiny heads of a number of new clubs.

Mr. Harmon and Mr. Bassett stared at the implements with disapproving eyes.

"What do you got to have all those funny-looking doodads for?" Mr. Harmon inquired. "The game is to hit the ball, ain't it?"

"You need the different clubs for the different shots," the clerk explained. "Well, I don't know," Mr. Harmon said doubtfully. "This is out of my line of business. I suppose I'm getting stuck, but I'll take the things."

"So'll I," said Mr. Bassett gloomily. "Whereabouts you going to play the fool game?" Mr. Harmon inquired.

"Out at Van Cortlandt Park," Mr. Bassett replied. "That's a public place, and it don't cost you a million dollars a year to belong to it."

"That's me!" said Mr. Harmon. "I'm going to play there, too. Say, his face beamed with the radiance of an idea. "Why don't you and me go out and play together? We're both of us business men and in the same fix."

"That's splendid!" Mr. Bassett admitted with a lightening of his funeral tone. "Splendid! How about Monday afternoon?"

"All right, Mr. Monday afternoon," Mr. Harmon agreed. "That's fine."

On Monday afternoon Mr. Bassett and Mr. Harmon arrived at Van Cortlandt Park.

"I suppose we better kind of watch these fellows for a little while and find out what they do," Mr. Harmon suggested.

So they strolled aimlessly along, picking up the fine points of the game. After a little time Mr. Harmon observed:

"You just lay the ball down and hit it, I guess. I suppose we might as well start here as anywhere else."

Acting on this suggestion, Mr. Harmon and Mr. Bassett stepped out into the fairway, half way between the sixth tee and the green, depositing a ball apiece on the turf, and got ready to begin the process that would enable them to stay indefinitely at Van Cortlandt Park.

AFTER some deliberation, Mr. Bassett decided that he liked the putter better than any other of the clubs in his bag and drew that forth. Mr. Harmon decided that a driver was better suited to his needs. At this point they were interrupted by angry shouts.

A choleric middle-aged man in disreputable golfing clothes charged down on them, waving their clubs and demanding shrilly. "What's funny?"

"You!" Mr. Bassett explained succinctly in his funeral tone. "You missed the ball."

"Don't you suppose I know it?" Harmon demanded. "What if I did? It's still there, ain't it? I can hit it at again if I want to, can't I?"

A spark grew in Mr. Bassett's dull eyes; a tremor of his face was apparent in his listless, sepulchral tone as he inquired:

"What are you mad about? I can laugh if I want to, can't I?"

Mr. Harmon stooped and snatched up his ball. "Sure you can laugh," he agreed caustically. "You got to wait till I make a mistake the first time I try anything and then you prove it to me. You can laugh—yes. Get up here now and let me see if

you can hit that ball as well as you can laugh. You think I'm so funny, let me see you do something!"

Mr. Bassett nodded agreement and stepped forward. "You needn't get mad about it," he said.

"I'm not mad," Mr. Harmon insisted vehemently. "What should I be mad about? Can't we play at a fool little game like this without losing our tempers? I'm not mad!"

Mr. Bassett shook his head as he gloomily built up a large tee for his ball. "I thought you were," he said sorrowfully. "You acted like it."

Mr. Harmon wanted to argue this point, but he forbore because he wanted to see Mr. Bassett perform. As the old gentleman, still clinging to his putter as his favorite club, deliberately drew back the instrument, Mr. Harmon inhaled deeply and got ready to laugh. He meant to show Bassett something hearty and sincere in the line of mirth—something jovial and rib-shaking, at which no gentleman could possibly take offense.

Mr. Bassett drew back the metal head of the putter very deliberately and also a very short distance. He did not swing wildly at the ball as Mr. Harmon had done with his driver. He hit it a light tap, administered in much the same style as that favored by nice old ladies when playing croquet. The club met the little ball on the large tee, truly and fair, and sent it sailing down the course for almost twenty yards.

MR. HARMON found himself in an embarrassing predicament. There he was with a hearty laugh in his system and his mouth wide open to let it out and nothing at all to start it going. Mr. Bassett had hit the ball. That was undeniable. Mr. Harmon felt that he had been tricked. Mr. Bassett added materially to this conviction by his behavior. He turned and looked at Mr. Harmon and laughed again. It was a triumphant laugh. Mr. Harmon felt that no one but a

small-spirited braggart could possibly have laughed such a laugh.

"There you are," said Mr. Bassett. Then Mr. Harmon laughed. It was not the laugh that he had prepared. It was a weak, forced laugh and Mr. Harmon was keenly aware that it was inadequate to convey the scorn that he felt. Nevertheless, it was a laugh and it at least partially fulfilled its purpose.

Mr. Bassett frowned and the spark in his dull eyes grew brighter. "What are you laughing at," he asked. "I hit it, didn't I?"

"Anybody could hit it with that little thingamajig you used," Mr. Harmon said derisively. "You didn't hit it, anyhow, you pushed it."

Mr. Bassett felt that there were many objectionable qualities in Mr. Harmon that he had not previously noticed. He decided that the best thing for Mr. Harmon was humiliation.

"You've got a thingamajig like the one I hit the ball with," he said provocatively. "If you think you're so good you try hitting with that and see what happens."

Harmon appealed to the starter. "Is that kind of a thing let's get the kind of a thing to hit the ball with?" he demanded.

"Get here," the starter said. "That's what's called a putter. You use that when you get down on the green. The thing to hit with is a driver, like the one you used."

"Aah! What did I tell you?" Mr. Harmon cried. "That thing you hit it with ain't the thing to hit it with at all."

"Is there a rule against hitting it with this thing here?" Mr. Bassett asked.

The starter shook his head. "No," he confessed. "There's no rule against it; you can hit it with that if you want to."

"Aah! Mr. Bassett exclaimed jubilantly. "What you got to say about it now? He says there's no rule against it."

"Well, maybe there isn't any rule," Mr. Harmon admitted, grumblingly, as he placed his ball for a second try. "But there's right ways of doing things and things ought to be done that way, whether there's a rule or not. There ain't no rules that say not to eat pie with your knife, but just the same you don't eat pie with your knife, do you?"

Then he added maliciously: "Or maybe you do? A man who'd hit the ball with that thing you got there, when you know it ain't the thing to hit with—I wouldn't be surprised if he would eat pie with his knife."

"Well, if I couldn't get the pie to my mouth with my fork without dropping it, I guess I would use my knife," Mr. Bassett declared. "I'd rather do something the wrong way than do it the right way and not do anything, like you did."

Mr. Harmon scowled fiercely at the little white pellet trickled lazily down the course for a few yards and stopped. Mr. Harmon waddled after it and savagely swung at it again with his driver, whereupon Mr. Bassett gently tapped the same with his putter and the game was on.

Mr. Bassett won the first hole in 26. Mr. Harmon taking 44. They panted and perspired throughout the afternoon, and ultimately succeeded in playing five holes, four of which Mr. Bassett won. Mr. Harmon, however, won the last hole in a triumphant 28 and started for home much elated.

"I was just beginning to get the idea of the thing," he explained to Bassett, as they limped wearily toward the elevated. "You hold the club like this." He stopped, tired as he was, drew a club from his bag and illustrated.

"You hold the club like this and then you hit the ball this way." He shifted his position slightly. "Trouble with me, I was hitting at the ball like this." He illustrated again.

Mr. Bassett shook his head disparagingly. "That ain't right," he said. He also drew a club from his bag. "I was watching some of those fellows that do it so good and I noticed they hit this way." Whereupon Mr. Bassett obliged with an illustration.

"Is that so?" said Mr. Harmon, truthfully. "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'm not a betting man, but I'll just bet you a dollar that the next time we play I beat you!"

"You're on," said Mr. Bassett. "I don't like to take your money, but if you're bound to throw it away, I

might as well have it as anybody else."

"When will we play?" Mr. Harmon asked eagerly.

"Why, next Monday," Mr. Bassett said. "We're going to play once a week, aren't we?"

"Oh, sure!" Mr. Harmon agreed, somewhat embarrassed. "Next Monday, sure! I'll meet you at 1 o'clock at the starting place."

THE next afternoon Mr. Harmon waddled eagerly up to the starting place with his clubs over his fat shoulder and found Mr. Bassett sitting on a bench, waiting his turn at the tee.

"Why, what are you doing here?" said Mr. Harmon. "I thought you weren't coming out till Monday of next week."

"I didn't say I wasn't coming out," Mr. Bassett explained. "I thought you said you weren't coming till next Monday."

"I didn't intend to," Mr. Harmon said. "But I got to talking to my son last night at dinner and I says to him: 'Fred, I says, if I got to play golf the way I look at it is like this: I'd better go out and play it and get it done with. No use dragging it along once a week for months. I might as well do it while I'm doing it and get cured so I can come back and tend to business.'"

"I'm glad that's the way of it," Mr. Bassett said, gloomily. "I'd hate to think that you was trying to take advantage of me by coming out here to practice while I was slaving away in the office."

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"You don't think I'd do such a thing like that?" Mr. Harmon demanded, indignantly.

"I hope not," Mr. Bassett said, in a tone that implied some doubt.

"But how did you happen to come out today?" Mr. Harmon asked.

"My sons insisted on it," Mr. Bassett explained. "They said I looked so much better last night, and they guessed that the thing for me to do for a while was to come out oftener than once a week. They think that I ought to come out every once in a while for a few weeks and then maybe I'll get better so fast that I may not need to come any more at all."

The pair played nine holes that afternoon and Mr. Bassett won six of them. However, Mr. Harmon's performance on the seventh hole was a soothing ointment for his hurt pride. He did it in 18.

"I got the idea now," he crowed, exultantly, as they started home. "Trouble with me is I been trying to hit like this." He stopped and illustrated. "That is wrong," he continued. "You can see yourself, you can't hit it right like that. He shifted his feet and changed his grip on the club. "What you want to do is to hit at it like this. That is the way I was hitting at it when I got the ball into the hole in 18. I'll bet you tomorrow I can do all of them in 18, or maybe less."

"Are you coming out tomorrow?" Mr. Bassett inquired.

Mr. Harmon reddened. "Well, I thought I might," he said, hesitatingly. "The way I look at it is: If I'm going to do this I might as well do it and get it done with as quick as possible."

"I'll meet you at the starting place at 1 o'clock," Mr. Bassett said. "Bet you a dollar I beat you."

He did. He beat Mr. Harmon the next day and the day after that and the day after that. He beat him every day, Sundays included, for two weeks. Then one afternoon Mr. Harmon exhibited an astounding reversal of form. He beat Mr. Bassett decisively. He repeated his victory on the following day.

As they walked toward the elevated after Mr. Harmon's second triumph, a lean, tanned young fellow stopped and spoke to the exultant winner. "Well, Mr. Harmon, how did it go today?" he inquired affably.

The question seemed to fluster Mr. Harmon. "Well, all right, all right," he said, evasively. "See you again some time. Good-by!"

"Just a minute," said the young man. "Do you want to take a lesson again tomorrow morning?"

"Oh, yes—maybe so. Good-by!" Mr. Harmon said hurriedly.

"At 10 o'clock," the young man persisted.

"Yes, 10 o'clock. Good-by!" Mr. Harmon stammered.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Bassett. "What do you mean taking a lesson? Are you going to college somewhere?"

"No, no," said Mr. Harmon lightly. "It's just a joke. Let's go."

"Introduce me to your friend," Mr. Bassett requested. "Maybe I would like to play a little joke, too."

"Oh, sure," Mr. Harmon agreed in an agony of embarrassment. "This is Mr. Carmichael, Mr. Bassett."

"I'm in a hurry. I got a date. Let's go!"

"All right, you run along," Mr. Bassett suggested. "I'll stop and talk with Mr. Carmichael. You haven't got a date, have you, Mr. Carmichael?"

"You're not in a hurry?"

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